1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

323 In both communities it was said that men and women make pots, and of five pots bought at Bendiyagalge at different times three were said to have been made by men and two by women. Further, it was agreed that pots had been made for a very long time and our informants at Sitala Wanniya said that they were made in their grandfather's grandfather's time, the longest period we ever heard a Vedda mention. A small pot, the upper right-hand pot of Plate LXII, made by Poromala of Bingoda, has a [531 177] rough chevron pattern upon it; no importance or meaning was attached to this, which was avowedly copied from a pot obtained by barter. The thick open pot without a lip shown in the lower right-hand corner was made by Poromala (Walaha) who volunteered the information that the oldest pots were lipless. The large pot in the centre of the upper row was made by his wife. The pot to the left of this was made by Poromala (Walaha) and the pot underneath this by Randu Wanniya. It [172] is worthy of note that though many fragments of wheel-made pottery were found in the upper layers of the floor of the Bendiyagalge caves, no trace of pottery was found in the deepest layer associated with the quartz implements figured in Chapter I.

Tools and Weapons.

411 The bow and arrow with the axe are the only iron tools used by the Veddas for the chase, for fighting, and for general [437] domestic use. The iron arrow and axe heads are obtained by barter, as are the areca nut-cutters and strike-a-lights which most Veddas now possess. To a limited extent the areca nut-cutters are used as tools, for we have seen the final polishing and trimming of arrow shafts performed with these.

411 No spells are recited or other magic used when making axes ● 322 or bows and arrows. At Henebedda the wood of the *kobbewal* (*Allophylus cobbe*) is used for the bow; a sapling is peeled and shaved down until the desired amount of flexibility is obtained, it is then stained black. The bow string is made of the bast of [283 314] a tree called *aralu* (*Terminalia chebula*), the same is used to bind that part of the shaft of the arrow pierced by the tang of the arrow head, the binding being afterwards covered with gum or resin obtained from the timbiri tree (Diospyros embryopteris).

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX8 Vedda AX8

resin obtained from the *timbiri* tree (*Dioglyrus embryopteris*). 411
The shaft of the arrow is commonly made of the wood of the 322
welan tree (*Pterospermum suberifolium*). The arrow is still the almost universal cutting tool, as we had good opportunity of ascertaining at Henebedda. There was no knife in the community, and we noticed the skill with which a deer was skinned 412 252
and cut up with an arrow. The Veddas certainly desired no better tool, and when we pressed a butcher's knife on one of them in order to see how he would handle the unaccustomed tool, it was interesting to note how slowly he worked and how poor the result was compared with that he obtained with an arrow, which he held just above the blade somewhat as a European holds a penholder. No less astonishing was the skill employed in removing the skull cap with a few strokes of the axe, not only was the brain lifted out and cooked entire, but it was removed so neatly and cleanly that the result was more suggestive of an anatomical preparation than a piece of butcher's work.

The Veddas we met were all bad or indifferent shots, and 411
we have no doubt that game is seldom shot at a distance much beyond fifteen or twenty yards, the marvellous stalking of the Veddas enabling them to approach within this distance. The bow, to which the string is securely fastened at one end, is carefully unstrung when not in use. To string it, this end is placed upon the ground, the upper end of the shaft and the string being held in the hands, the sole of one foot is then placed against the middle of the shaft which is steadied, we might almost say gripped, between the great toe and the second toe. Much of the weight of the body is thrown against the middle of the shaft while the hands pull down the upper end to which the string is quickly secured, as is shown in Plate LXIII. Plate LXIV shows the position of the hands and arms immediately before the arrow is released. The bowman is Handuna [145]
of Henebedda, who is left-handed and who in spite of being the father of a large family remains the only left-handed individual in the community. The length of a bow collected at Henebedda was 172 cm., while four arrows also obtained at Henebedda varied from 88 to 105 cm. in length.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1926) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

sticks are easily obtainable from broken branches scattered everywhere. Gama, who was entrusted with the demonstration, chose two twigs, one the thickness of the index finger and about a foot and a half long, the other as thick as the little finger and about ten inches long. Having barked these, he whittled down the centre of the larger stick, and, in the flat surface thus produced, scooped out a shallow cavity, at one border of which he contrived a V-shaped extension. A piece of cloth about two inches square was placed on the ground under the centre of the stick which was held firmly down, cavity uppermost, by the toes of the operator, aided by the hands of an assistant. The smaller stick was then placed vertically over the other—its point, rendered bluntly conical, engaging in the cavity—and briskly rotated between the open palms. The firm downward pressure with which these movements were accompanied, caused the palms to descend the length of the stick from time to time. As often as this happened, the hands were quickly disengaged and re-applied as before to the upper part, and the twirling manoeuvre repeated. This had been done but twice when smoke was seen. Soon a small heap of charred dust like coffee-grounds accumulated round the hole, to escape down the V-shaped gutter on to the cloth. The smoke increased; there was a smell of charred wood. Suddenly a spark was thrown on to the black dust and the rag caught fire. A few dry leaves were collected and set alight. Within two minutes of the commencement of the operation there was a lively fire. When the smoke is observed to come from the accumulated dust, apart from that at the point of contact between the two sticks, it is a sign that the object is achieved. The rag is then rolled to enclose the dust—cigarette-fashion—and blown into at one end, so that it soon smokes heavily and catches fire.

372

It is strange that an art so simple in adept hands (not by any means so in those of a novice) should have been allowed to fall into disuse in wild Ceylon. I have seen refinements of this method; a coconut-shell, flat stone, or skull of a small animal for instance, being used by an assistant to press down the vertical stick, and a twist of bark to rotate it but they were less effectual than the simple procedure I have described.

[178]

ARCHERY

322
411

The present day Veddas, we have seen, are poor bowmen; they have, however, not yet quite lost the art of fashioning superb bows and arrows.

The bow is made from the *mahakahala-gaha* or the *kobawela*; the stone bow (*gal-dhumna*) from the *gatawela-gaha*; the bow string from the inner sheath of the bark of *aralu-wel*.*

[324]

The size of the bow is proportioned to the archer's strength. I have seen one six and a half feet long and as thick as a child's wrist; and, judging from its drawing power, no hand but a giant's could have wielded it. The usual length of a bow is from five and a half feet to five feet ten inches. It is made of a single stave, thick at the centre, without contrivance to give grip, flattened along the back, and tapering towards the horns which, without being notched, are tightly encircled by a few turns of cord to prevent the string slipping.

The arrow is made from the *es* or *welang*† tree, the wood of which when dry is of remarkable lightness. A straight twig the girth of the finger

*Terminalia chebula.

†Pterospermum suberifolium.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

322 411 is taken, barked, and straightened by being passed rapidly a few times through a flame, and then bent over the knee or between the hands. It is shaved down to uniform thickness with an arecanut-cutter or arrow blade, and cut to suitable length, roughly gauged by holding it along the outstretched arm from the nearer nipple to the end of the middle finger, giving it an average measure of two and a half feet, or slightly less. An arrow belonging to the great bow I have mentioned, measured three and a half feet. The nock or notch is a quarter of an inch deep and cut square.

411 237 284 The arrow is feathered with the wing plumes of the owl, devil-bird, jungle-cock, or large crane (*mana koka*); the owl's, besides being the best, are easily picked up along dry stream beds, on the trees bordering which the birds usually roost. A feather is split unequally down the rachis, only the larger segment being used. Four such segments, about two inches long, are arranged equidistantly round the shaft, an inch and a quarter from the end, and bound neatly down with *aralu* fire, the mouth helping in the process. The first turns are merely taken round that part of the shaft, which is immediately below the feathers, then round the bared lower ends of the rachis, and then carried along, at spaced intervals, between the carefully separated barbs. Should a strand not prove long enough, it is finished off by having its end tucked in between rachis and shaft, and another is similarly begun. Finally the ruffled barbs are straightened out between the thumb and fingers moistened with saliva. A few turns of fibre just below the notch serve to give grip to the drawing fingers.

411 The arrow-head is made of flattened iron obtained from local blacksmiths. It is three to five inches long, of lanceolate shape in imitation of the *na* leaf, and sharp at the edges; serving as much as a cutting implement as an arrow. By a tang it is let into the end of the shaft to which it is firmly secured with fibre. All the strung parts of the arrow, [824] as well as the bow-string, are finally dressed with the sticky milk of *kiri-wel* to prevent untwisting. Both bow and arrow, being very liable to the ravages of boring insects, are always kept hung over the smoke when not in use.

The method of stringing the bow is by placing one end of it, to which the string is knotted, on the ground, and then pressing on its centre either with the bent knee or by a foot thrust. A correctly strung bow should measure at its centre a span between string and belly of bow; this is rather more than the "fist-mele" (clenched fist with thumb upright) the rough estimate of European stringing.

The arrow release favoured by the Veddas is that in which the cord is drawn with the first joints of the index and middle fingers, the arrow being usually placed on the left of the bow. The style of archery is often peculiar: the arrow fitted to the bow is raised head high; the right elbow is now swung up in an awkward flourish above the head, and then brought slowly down to alignment with the eye, as the string is drawn out to its fullest extent and the arrow delivered.

DANCING

177 536 The ceremonial dances of the Veddas have been minutely described and illustrated by Seligmann. The dance we are about to describe seems to have been performed before him in its greatest purity at Henebedde. The differences between his description and ours must be